

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY FREETOWN PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212574

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, SL

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: FREETOWN 2651

1. WE APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS EMBASSY HAS MADE IN
CONVERSATION WITH MATTURI TO URGE SUPPORT FOR US POSITION
ON PUERTO RICO. IN LIGHT OF LAST YEAR'S DISAPPOINTING
VOTE BY GOSL, HOWEVER, AND FACT THAT COMMITTEE VOTE WILL
BE VERY CLOSE THIS YEAR, WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO DISCUSS
MATTER WITH MINISTER CONTEH OR DEPUTY MINISTER WILLIAMS IF
THEY HAVE RETURNED, OTHERWISE WITH MATTURI AGAIN. YOU
SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT THIS QUESTION IS OF CONCERN TO THE
HIGHEST LEVELS OF US GOVERNMENT, THAT SIERRA LEONE'S VOTE
IS CRUCIAL, AND THAT GIVEN THE EXCELLENT STATE OF OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS WE HOPE WE CAN EXPECT THEIR SUPPORT
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FOR PROCEDURAL RESOLUTION.

2. ON THE MERITS OF THE QUESTION ITSELF, YOU SHOULD
EMPHASIZE THE FOLLOWING:

-- THE PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION HAS MADE CLEAR HIS
WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT THE EXPRESSED WISHES OF THE

PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO, WHETHER THEY CHOOSE INDEPENDENCE, STATEHOOD, COMMONWEALTH STATUS, OR A MODIFICATION OF THAT STATUS.

-- THE PROCLAMATION IS A REAFFIRMATION OF EXISTING US POLICY THAT PUERTO RICO IS CLEARLY SELF-GOVERNING WITHIN THE MEANING OF CHAPTER XI OF THE UN CHARTER. THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO FREELY ENTERED INTO THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT IN 1952, AND EXPRESSED THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THAT ARRANGEMENT IN A 1967 REFERENDUM.

-- PUERTO RICO HAS A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY. FOR THE COMMITTEE TO DECIDE THAT PUERTO RICO BELONGS ON A LIST OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT THE PRESENT STATUS DOES NOT REFLECT THE FREELY EXPRESSED VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO. SUCH A CONCLUSION FLIES IN THE FACE OF ITS HISTORY AND POLITICS OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, INCLUDING REPEATED FREE ELECTIONS.

3. FYI: WE ACCEPT THAT THE GOSL IS SINCERE IN WISHING TO AVOID A REPEAT OF LAST YEAR, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE A READ-BACK FROM AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OF ITS POLICY POSITION AS WELL AS CONFIRMATION THAT APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN CABLED TO GOSL
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